

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
NORTHERN DIVISION**

Rosemary Rich,

Plaintiff,

v.

Harris & Harris, Ltd.; and DOES 1-10,
inclusive,

Defendants.

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Civil Action No.: _____

COMPLAINT

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Rosemary Rich, by undersigned counsel, states

as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of Defendants' repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA") in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.

2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Rosemary Rich ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Towson, Maryland, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

5. Defendant, Harris & Harris, Ltd. ("H&H"), is an Illinois business entity with an address of 111 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 400, Chicago, Illinois 60604, operating as a collection agency, and is a "debt collector" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by H&H and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. H&H at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. The Plaintiff allegedly incurred a financial obligation (the “Debt”) to State of Maryland, CCU (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to H&H for collection, or H&H was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. H&H Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. In or around the beginning of September 2018, H&H contacted Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt.

13. Plaintiff advised H&H that that Debt was paid in full.

14. By letter dated September 14, 2018, H&H demanded payment of the Debt, that H&H had notice was paid in full.

15. Upon receipt of the letter, Plaintiff called H&H and confirmed that the Debt was paid in full.

16. Nonetheless, H&H continued to call Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt that

Plaintiff did not owe.

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

17. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.

18. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.

19. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

20. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d in that Defendants engaged in behavior the natural consequence of which was to harass, oppress, or abuse the Plaintiff in connection with the collection of a debt.

21. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.

22. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e in that Defendants used false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of a debt.

23. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) in that Defendants employed false and deceptive means to collect a debt.

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692f in that Defendants used unfair and unconscionable means to collect a debt.

25. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendant constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

26. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendant's violations.

COUNT II
VIOLATIONS OF THE MARYLAND CONSUMER DEBT COLLECTION ACT
MD. CODE COMM. LAW § 14-201, et seq.

27. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

28. The Defendants are each individually a "collector" as defined under MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-201(b).

29. The debt is a "consumer transaction" as defined under MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-201(c).

30. The Defendants repeatedly contacted the Plaintiff with the intent to harass or abuse, in violation of MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-202(6).

31. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages proximately caused by the Defendants' violations.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against the Defendants:

1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against the Defendants;
2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A) against the Defendants;
3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) against the Defendants;
4. Actual damages pursuant to MD. Code Comm. Law § 14-203;
5. Actual damages pursuant to MD. Ann. Code. Bus. Reg. § 7-401(b);

6. Actual damages from the Defendants for the all damages suffered as a result of the intentional, reckless, and/or negligent FDCPA violations and intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff; and
7. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: June 26, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

By /s/ Sergei Lemberg
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